

WAITSFIELD UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST **CONSTITUTION**

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this Church as an organization of Christians and as a non-profit corporation shall be known as the Waitsfield United Church of Christ, Inc., formerly known as the Waitsfield Federated Church, henceforth referred to as the Church, having been reorganized on June 1, 1998, according to the laws of the State of Vermont. This church is a member of the local, state, and national United Church of Christ associations or their successor organizations.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

This church recognizes Jesus Christ as the head of the Church and finds in the Holy Scriptures its guidance in matters of faith and practice. Each member shall have the right to follow the Word of God according to the dictates of conscience under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. We (1) strive to be inclusive of all who seek to know God and to love and serve God through worship, mission, outreach, education, and fellowship; (2) celebrate the sacraments of Baptism and The Lord's Supper; (3) proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ as revealed to us in the Gospel stories and scriptures.

ARTICLE III - FAITH AND COVENANT

Section 1: Covenant

In the presence of God, we do solemnly covenant one with another to join hands in the life of this church.

We affirm our faith in God as the Creator of all humanity and seek to know and understand God's purposes for us.

We accept Jesus Christ as the head of the Church and seek to make his example of love, acceptance, and forgiveness a reality in our own lives and in the life of our congregation.

We promise one another Christian love and understanding, support, and concern.

We acknowledge an obligation to be active participants in the life, worship, and ministry of the Church, and to serve the community and the world, sharing our resources in a spirit of compassion and justice.

We accept responsibility for our conduct as representatives of God's church, realizing that each of us has an effect upon the world.

We do, therefore, pledge our fellowship, our prayers, our time, talent, and resources in support of this Church, the church universal, and one another as a family of God's children.

Section 2: Statement of Faith: (1) the United Church of Christ's "Statement of Faith" in the form of a doxology and (2) the United Church of Canada's "Statement of Faith" as follows:

"We believe in God who has created and is creating; who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh, to reconcile and make new; who works in us and others by the Spirit. We trust in God. We are called to be the Church: to celebrate God's presence, to love and serve others, to seek justice and resist evil, to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope. In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God."

ARTICLE IV - GOVERNANCE

The government of this Church is vested in its members, who shall exercise the right of control in all its affairs, subject in legal matters to the Articles of Association granted it by the State of Vermont.

Although this Church is not subject to the authority of any ecclesiastical body, it accepts the obligations of mutual counsel, cooperation, and support involved in the free fellowship of the United Church of Christ, and pledges itself to be in covenant with the work of that body.

The Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote of no less than thirty (30) voting members in attendance at a duly warned meeting, be it an annual meeting or a special meeting. The proposed amendments shall be inserted in the warning of such a meeting.

ARTICLE V - MEMBERSHIP

A. Membership

Members will be received into this Church when they publicly accept the Faith and Covenant of this Church (1) on confirmation of faith or Baptism, (2) by letter of transfer from another church, or (3) on reaffirmation of faith.

B. Responsibility

It shall be the continuing responsibility of all Members to (1) strive to uphold the Covenant of the Church, (2) help in the work of the Church, and (3) contribute to the Church through time, talent, and financial support.

C. Associate Membership

A person who wishes to participate in the life of this Church while maintaining membership in another church may be received as an Associate Member by the same process that regular, active Members are received. Associate Members shall have all the rights and duties of regular Members, except the right to a letter of transfer to another church.

D. Inactive and Non-Members

Members who for a period of two years have not (1) attended Church services, (2) communicated with the Church, nor (3) contributed to its support shall be considered to be inactive and will have their names moved from the active to the inactive membership list by the Clerk, after consultation with the Minister and the Church Council.

Inactive and non-members may participate in all aspects of Church life, but may not serve (1) as an officer of the Church, (2) as the Auditor, (3) as a Trustee of the Investment Funds, nor (4) have voting powers.

Inactive Members who wish to be restored to active status may request same of the Clerk.

E. Termination of Membership

A Member may be released from his or her covenant with this Church by (1) written request, (2) written request of the Member for transfer to another church, or (3) remaining on the inactive Membership list for five consecutive years, all subject to the approval of the Church Council, who shall make every effort to contact the inactive Member prior to taking action.

ARTICLE VI - AUDITOR AND TRUSTEES

The Auditor and Trustees of the Funds are accountable to the congregation.

A. Auditor

The Auditor is charged to faithfully audit the accounts of the Treasurer, Financial Secretary, and Trustees of the Endowment Funds, submitting a written report to the annual meeting. The Auditor shall be elected at the annual meeting for a

term of one year, with a five year limit. After a period of two years, a past Auditor may be re-elected. External audits will be conducted every five years.

B. Trustees of the Endowment Funds

The Trustees of the Endowment Funds shall consist of three members, one to be elected by the congregation at each annual meeting for a term of three years with no restrictions on succession. The Trustees shall: receive, invest, sell, exchange, lease, convert, reinvest, and manage all endowment funds as stipulated by the donors.

The Trustees reserve the right, in their sole discretion, to decline the acceptance of a particular gift due to its inappropriateness, restrictions placed upon it, or potential financial or legal liability to the Church.

The income from the investment of the endowment funds shall be distributed annually by the Trustees as determined by a majority of the Trustees in accordance with the Trustees' policy, as defined below.

The Trustees shall create a policy which shall be approved by the Church Council and can be modified as needed by the Church Council. This policy shall (1) outline the investment strategy for all endowment funds, (2) provide a specific description of how the investment returns will be calculated and what percentage can be annually withdrawn and how any distribution will be directed (e.g. certain percentage to specific programs or general Church budget), (3) outline record keeping procedures, (4) describe how donors will be recognized and what forms of requested recognition that will not be allowed, and (5) include all other information that the Trustees deem necessary or appropriate.

ARTICLE VII - HIRING AND TERMINATION OF MINISTER

A. Hiring

When the office of Minister becomes vacant, the Church Council shall (1) arrange for an Interim Minister to serve until a Settled Minister is called, and 2) appoint a Pastoral Search Committee consisting of at least five, but not more than seven, Members from a broad spectrum of the active Church Membership. With the help of the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ, the Pastoral Search Committee shall: (1) create a Church profile, (2) review the qualifications of possible candidates and interview them to determine their capacity to serve as Minister of this Church, (3) when the Committee has agreed on a single candidate, outline the terms of call with the candidate, and (4) the candidate must be ratified by a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote of no less than thirty (30) members in attendance at a duly warned special meeting of the congregation.

B. Termination of Call Agreement

The relationship of Minister may be agreeably dissolved on 90 days notice by either the Minister's accepted written resignation or by mutual agreement. In the event of conflict or dissatisfaction on the part of either the Minister or the Church, termination of the terms of call may be considered only after consultation with an executive staff member of the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ. Termination of call must be ratified by a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote of no less than thirty (30) members in attendance at a duly warned special meeting.

ARTICLE VIII - MEETINGS

A. Worship

Worship services shall be held at given hours as defined by the Church Council, except when temporarily suspended by the Moderator, in consultation with the Minister.

B. Annual Meeting

An annual meeting of the Church shall be held, after proper warning by the Clerk, on the first Sunday of February of each year to (1) hear and act on all reports, (2) consider for election those brought forth by the nominating committee while allowing for nominees from the floor, (3) transact any regular or special business as may properly come before such annual meeting.

C. Special Meetings

A special meeting of the Church may be held after proper warning by the Clerk. Special meetings may be called by the Minister, the Church Council, the Moderator, or five Church Members who have signed a written application for the same.

D. Robert's Rules of Order

Robert's Rules of Order shall govern all warned meetings of the congregation.

ARTICLE IX - WARNINGS

A warning of the annual meeting or any special meetings shall be read to the Church membership at Sunday worship and posted publicly for three consecutive weeks prior to the proposed date of said meeting, noting the time, place, and proposed business of such.

ARTICLE X - QUORUM

A quorum for a warned meeting of the congregation shall be no less than twenty (20) Members of the congregation. A quorum of any other body of the church shall be a majority of those voting members present. No votes can be cast by Proxy at any meeting.

ARTICLE XI - BY-LAWS

The structure of the governing body and description of the mission and ministry areas of the Church will be described in the Church By-Laws, once reviewed and voted on in accordance with our Constitution.

ARTICLE XII - DISSOLUTION

Upon dissolution of this Church, its assets, all property, and interest of which it shall then be possessed - including any devise, bequest, gift, or grant contained in any will, or other instrument in trust or otherwise made, made before or after such dissolution - shall be transferred to the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ or its successor.

Ratified on: June 21, 2009

Effective as of: June 21, 2009

Amended 2/2/14: Article VI, to Trustees of Endowment and related language